GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6903
ANSWERED ON:13.05.2002
EXPLOITATION OF WATER RESOURCES
AMBATI BRAHMANAIAH;RATTAN LAL KATARIA

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the water resources of the country are being exploited due to subsidy being given on power and diesel;

(b) if so, whether the Government have formulated any effacacious scheme to combat this situation;

(c) if so, whether any meeting under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister was recently held to discuss the issue; and

(d) if so, the outcome thereof ?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SMT. BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY)

(a) & (b) Electricity supply to agriculture sector in the country is by and large subsidized. According to the report of the National Commission for Integrated Water Resources Development Plan, the subsidized rates of power coupled with the use of flat-rate pricing for electricity have prompted maximum pumpage of ground water leading to its over-exploitation. Water including ground water is a State subject and, as such, its planning, development and management is the responsibility of the concerned State Government.

Government have taken several steps to control the over- exploitation of ground water, they include:-

(i) Constitution of Central Ground Water Authority under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for regulation and control of ground water management and development.

(ii) Circulation of a Model Bill to all the States/Union Territories to enable them to enact suitable legislation for regulation and control of ground water development.

(iii) Circulation of Manual on artificial recharge of ground water to the States/Union Territories to enable them to formulate area specific artificial recharge schemes to check the declining trend in ground water levels.

(iv) the Central Ground Water Board is implementing a Central Sector Scheme for Study of Recharge to Ground Water on "pilot basis". The scheme has been proposed to be extended in the X Five Year Plan to cover more critical and dark areas.

(c) & (d) The fifth meeting of the National Water Resources Council (NWRC),was held under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Prime Minister on 1st April, 2002 to consider the draft revised National Water Policy. The Revised National Water Policy, with certain modifications made in light of the views expressed and suggestions made by the members of the Council, was adopted and a Resolution to this effect was unanimously passed by the Council. The issue of subsidy to power was outside the scope of the discussion.